

REMARKS

Claims 1-13, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Claims 1 and 2 are amended for clarification, and claim 3 is amended to place it into independent form.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 and 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2001-054612 (JP '612). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claims 1 and 2

These claims are directed to a gaming machine 1, as illustrated in the exemplary embodiment shown in Figs. 1 and 2, having a plurality of reels 3a-3c on which a plurality of symbols (not shown) are provided, and a cover body 2 with a plurality of observation windows 5a, 7a that cover the reels and provide selective viewing of the symbols through one of the observation windows. The machine includes a first light source 3d that is disposed inside the reels and emits visible light, and a second light source 7b to emit ultraviolet light.

The first symbols are viewed through the first observation window 5a, via a half mirror 5b, as explained at page 9, and the first and second symbols may be viewed through the second observation window 7a, based upon the selective illumination of the lights 3d and 7b. As explained at page 10, the second observation window 7a may have a filter to limit a quantity of light, thereby precluding the display of a main symbol on the second observation window 7a due to light leaked from the inner side of the physical reels.

JP '612

The Examiner specifically refers paragraph [0015] of the reference for a relevant teaching. As explained in paragraph [0011]-[0015] and illustrated in Figs. 6 and 7, the slot machine 10 has a reel unit 60 having three rotatable reels 40. Ultraviolet ray lamps 67 are fixed to the case 11 and illuminate the face of the reels 40. Each reel 40 has a pattern 61 on its peripheral face formed from a "fluorogram pedicel" 62 and a pattern part 63, as illustrated in Figs. 3 and 5.

No Disclosure of Plural Windows for Presenting Symbols

The Examiner does not explain what in the game machine disclosed in JP '612 corresponds to the plurality of observation windows. The use of plural windows in the present

invention is important, particularly where they all are operative to display the symbols on the reels, as disclosed. In order to clarify that there are spaced apart windows that can display symbols variably presented on a plurality of reels, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 2 in order to state that symbols are viewed through each window and that the reels are viewed through at least one of the plurality of windows.

Claim 3

In addition to the foregoing differences, Applicants respectfully submit that there are additional bases for novelty with regard to claim 3.

No Disclosure of Incandescent Lamp

While paragraph [0015] of JP '612 mentions "usual lighting systems, such as fluorescent lamp and an incandescent lamp," there is no teaching that both an ultraviolet ray lamp and an incandescent lamp would be used. More particularly, there is no teaching that a first visible light source that emits visible light is disposed inside the reels. At paragraph [0016] of JP '612, the English text teaches that lighting or putting out lights of an ultraviolet ray lamp can express the same pattern 61 as two kinds of patterns 61. The disclosure includes a detailed teaching with regard to ultraviolet ray lamp 67 at paragraph [0028] and the ultraviolet ray lamp control means 120 at paragraph [0039]. However, Applicants could find no teaching in the English language translation of (1) a first light source (2) disposed inside the reels to emit (3) visible light.

Since these are clear differences from the JP '612 reference, Applicants have placed placing original claim 3 into independent form. If the Examiner further rejects the claim in view of added art, the rejection cannot be made final.

Claim 7

Claim 7 depends from claim 3 and would be patentable for the reasons given with regard to this claim.

Claim 8

Claim 8 depends from claim 7 and would be patentable for the reasons given with regard to this claim. Also, as previously noted, there is no teaching of a second observation window in the drawings or the machine translated English text of JP '612. Thus, the limitations in the remaining claims 8-11 which specifically refer to a second observation window would not be anticipated by the reference.

Claims 9 and 10

Claims 9 and 10 depend from claim 7 and would be patentable for the reasons given with regard to this claim. Moreover, there is no "second light source," only a single ultraviolet source.

Claim 11

Claim 11 would be patentable over JP '612 for the reasons given for its parent claim 7.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4-6 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '612 and further in view of JP 2002-200243 (JP '243). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claims 4-6 and 13

Claims 4-6 and 13 further limit claim 3 by specifying, with reference to the preferred embodiment, the use of a mirror member 5b which provides reflected virtual images as first symbols viewed through the first observation window 5a. Claim 5 specifies that the mirror is a half mirror that permits a superposing of images and claim 6 specifies that the symbols are an inversion image. Finally, claim 13 states that the second observation window comprises a filter.

JP '243

First, these claims would be patentable over JP '612 because of their dependency from parent claim 3, as amended to be placed in independent form.

Second, JP '243 does not remedy the deficiencies of JP '612 since it does not teach the use of both ultraviolet light source and visible light source, particularly one that is disposed inside the reels.

At paragraph [0017], the figures are described as illustrating a slot machine 1 having the front panel 3 with a window 5 and a case 2, with three reels 6 arranged inside. A bulk sheet having patterns, such as characters, numbers, etc. are formed on the peripheral face of each wheel 6. The result is a “solid virtual image,” as described at paragraph [0026].

JP ‘243 also teaches in paragraph [0222] with reference to Figs. 1 and 2, an image display device 14 having a display screen oriented upward with a half mirror 15 arranged above the display device 14. A concave mirror 16 is arranged behind the half mirror 15. As explained at paragraph [0025], the original image displayed on the image display device 14 is changed at high speed and the half mirror 15, changes the direction back by reflection towards the front face using the concave mirror 16. The image appears on the front panel 3 at the picture transmission window 17.

Notably, there is only a single source of light and a single window. Thus, for the reasons already given, these claims would be patentable over the two references, taken alone or combined. Further, the specific content of the claims, in presenting a virtual superposed image, is not taught.

For example, the vibration of the mirror 16 is intended to provide a 2-dimensional picture that will be movable at high speed and turn into a stereoscopic picture, as explained at paragraph [0026]. Applicants respectfully submit that the mirror 16 is not the claimed “display disposed behind the mirror member, and that the image provided by the display and transmitted through the half mirror is not “superposed on each of the reflected virtual images” as the first symbol is viewed through the first observation window, as claimed.

With specific regard to claim 6, the Examiner asserts that JP ‘243 teaches the first symbols are an inversion image, at paragraph [0025]. Based Applicants’ review of the description, there is no discussion of an inversion image. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that this claim limitation is not met.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '612.

This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner admits that JP '612 does not disclose the reels rotating in opposite directions, but asserts it is well known in the gaming art to rotate reels in opposite directions during game play to make the game more appealing to the eye.

First, Applicants submit that the claim is patentable for the reasons given with regard to parent claim 7.

Second, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to cite relevant prior art that demonstrates rotation of reels in a first direction where a first game is expected and rotation in a second direction, opposite to the first direction, where a special lottery operation and a second game are executed. Even if the Examiner's statement is correct with regard to rotation of reels in opposite directions, the full scope of the limitations in the claim are not met by the Examiner's observation.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 29, 2008

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